REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to this amendment, Claims 1-11 were pending. By the present amendment, Claims 1, 6, 7 and 8 are amended and new Claims 12, 13 and 14 are added. No claims are canceled. Thus, Claims 1-14 are now pending.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 4, 160, 227 (Ikegami et al.). As presently amended, independent Claims 1 and 8 recite a structure wherein a conductive layer comprising ruthenium oxide, bismuth or its oxide, glass frit, and noble metal grains is provided on a lower surface of a ceramic substrate. Ikegami et al. does not describe such a structure and, thus, independent Claims 1 and 8 are not anticipated by Ikegami et al. Also, as presently amended, independent Claim 6 recites a structure comprising a conductive paste that includes ruthenium oxide, glass frit or noble metal grains or printed on a ceramic nitride substrate or a ceramic carbide base plate to form a resistive heating element by baking. Independent Claim 7 is recites the same structure as in claim 6, but wherein the conductive paste further includes bismuth or its oxide. Applicant respectfully submits that Ikegami et al. does not teach the structures recited in independent Claims 6 and 7 and, thus, Claims 6 and 7 are not anticipated by Ikegami et al.

Also in the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,888,467 (Hoffman) in view of 4,991,284 (Ezaki) and 5,064,573 (Watanabe et al.). Neither Hoffman nor Ezaki nor Watanabe et al. are seen to describe any hotplate wherein a conductive layer comprising ruthenium oxide, bismuth or its oxide, glass frit, and noble metal grains is provided on a lower surface of a ceramic substrate. As presently amended, independent Claims 1 and 8 recite such a structure (i.e., a structure wherein a conductive layer comprising ruthenium oxide, bismuth or its oxide, glass frit, and noble metal grains is provided on a lower surface of a ceramic substrate). Thus, independent Claims 1 and 8 are distinguishable over Hoffman, Ezaki and Watanabe et al.

Also, neither Hoffman nor Ezaki nor Watanabe et al. are seen to describe any hotplate wherein a conductive paste that includes ruthenium oxide, bismuth or its oxide, glass frit or noble metal grains or printed on a ceramic nitride substrate or a ceramic carbide base plate to form a resistive heating element by baking, as recited in independent Claims 6 and 7. Thus,

independent Claims 6 and 7 also distinguish over the combination of Hoffman, Ezaki and Watanabe et al.

In the Office Action, Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the base combination of United States Patent No. 4,888,467 (Hoffman) in view of 4,991,284 (Ezaki) and 5,064,573 (Watanabe et al.), further in view of either United States Patent No. 5, 996, 067 (Murakami et al.) or 4, 088, 502 (LaBar). For the reasons stated above, Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are patentable over all cited prior art, including the secondary Murakami et al. and LaBar references.

All Claims 1-14 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
STOUT, UXA, BUYAN & MULLINS, LLP

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Robert D. Buyan, Reg. No. 32,460

4 Venture, Suite 300
Irvine, CA 92618
Telephone:(949) 450-1750; Facsimile: (949) 450-1764
email: rbuyan@patlawyers.com

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on October 22, 2003.

Dated: October 22, 2003

By:
Robert D. Buyan Reg. No. 32,460